

## Start and Stop

Starting and stopping may seem like basic skills, but many children prefer cowboy starts and skidding stops. We want to impart how important it is to be in control of the bike, and these two maneuvers illustrate poor control.

### Starting:

#### Drill:

1. Ask for a volunteer to explain how to get on the bicycle in preparation for riding. Get input from other students if the answer is incorrect.
  - a. Straddle the bike with both feet on the ground
  - b. Raise the left pedal (or right, depending on rider preference) to the 10 o'clock position – this provides the power to start
  - c. Put the left (or right) foot on the pedal, with the right/opposite foot on the ground
  - d. Push off with the right (or left) foot while standing on the raised pedal
  - e. Both hands should be on the handlebars

Don't pedal after pushing off. Coast to a stop while standing on the pedal that has pushed down. Allow space for everyone to turn around and repeat the drill in the opposite direction.

### Stopping:

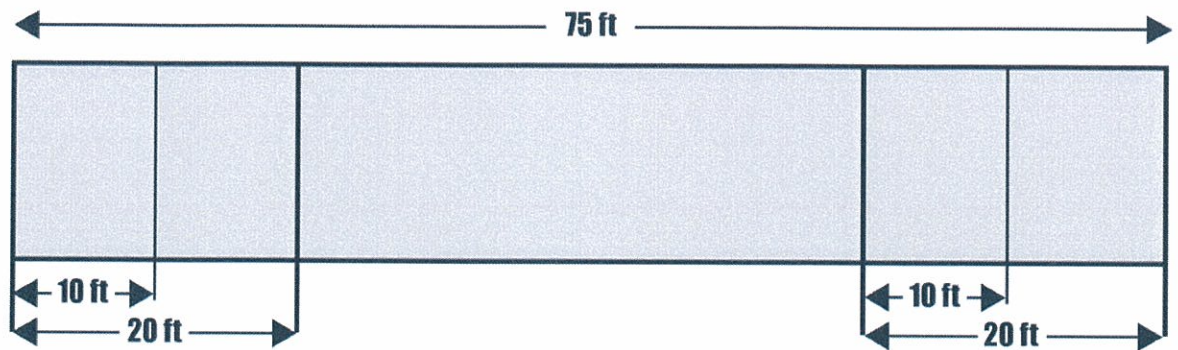
#### Drill 1:

1. Watch for children who do not stop the bike before putting their foot or feet on the ground and end up running with the bike between their legs. Why is this bad? Because the rider is not in control of the bike.
  - a. Have a student demo stopping with a coaster brake bike (if applicable)
  - b. Have a student demo stopping with a bike with hand brakes. Both brakes should be applied evenly to prevent skidding. Explain the dangers of using one brake exclusively (rear brake only = skid, front brake only = pitch over the handlebars).
    - i. Slow speed by applying the brakes
    - ii. As the bike nears the stop, slide off the seat and take the right foot off the pedal
    - iii. Lower the right foot toward the ground as the bike continues to slow
    - iv. At the moment the bicycle stops, the right foot contacts the ground

#### Drill 2:

Have each rider start pedaling down the lane and proceed to the first stop line, where they apply the brakes for a normal stop. The rider should complete the stop before reaching the 2<sup>nd</sup> stop line. They should be straddling their bicycle at completion of the stop with pedals

positioned for starting. Practice the exercise going in one direction, then turn around and repeat in the opposite direction.

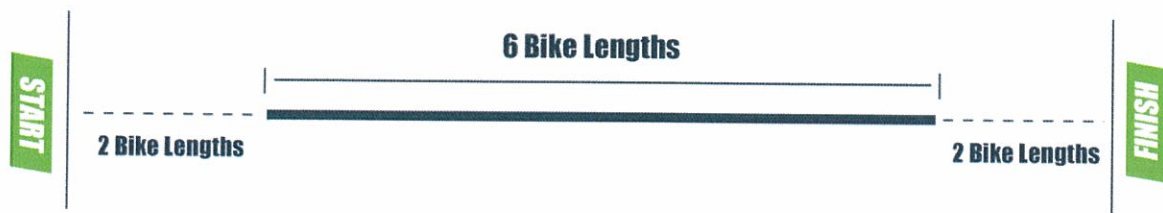


## Ride in a straight line

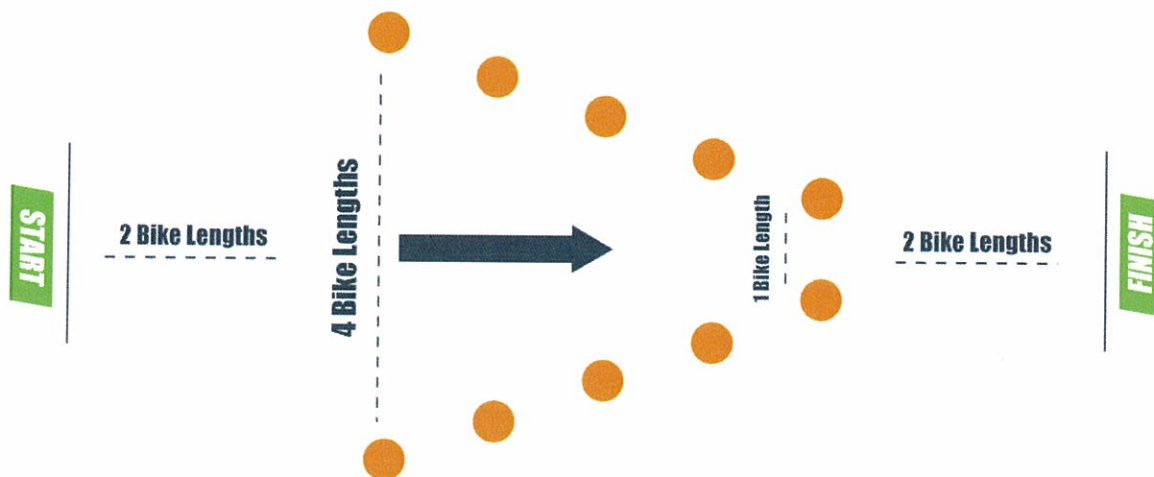
Drill:

The object is to follow the chalk line drawn on the blacktop with their front wheel. Draw a straight line on the blacktop, 20-30 feet long. Cones are set up to mark the course and they must stay within the cones. Keeping their tire right on the line will be very difficult (impossible actually) to do, but everybody should be able to stay within the cones. As riders practice this, suggest that they pick up their speed. Is it easier to stay on the line if you're going slower or faster?

### Straight line drill option 1



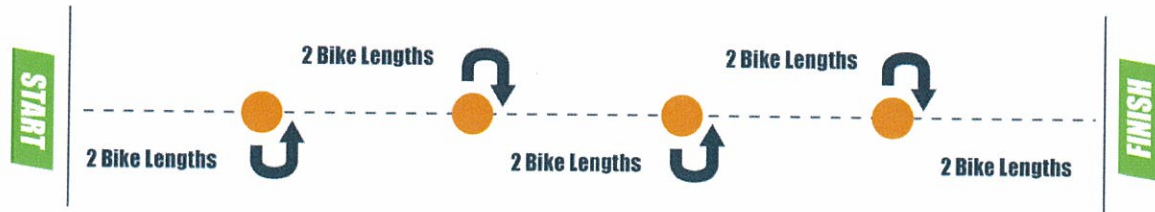
### Straight line drill option 2



## Slalom

Drill:

Set up the course with traffic cones placed four to six feet apart. The cyclist maneuvers through and around them. The rider should be able to comfortably and under control maneuver left and right around obstacles.



A variant on this is the Figure 8:

### Figure 8

Drill:

The rider should be able to change direction, balancing upright and in control by changing body position in order to follow the figure 8 pattern.

Draw or tape a start line.

Place 1 cone 2 bike lengths ahead and 1 bike length to the right of the start line. Place the other cone 2 bike lengths in front of the 1st cone in a straight line.

Draw arrows pointing in the direction you wish the rider to follow in a figure 8 pattern around the cones.

Draw or tape the finish line 2 bike lengths ahead and 1 bike length to the right of the last cone.

#### Testing:

The rider should be able to complete the figure 8 loop in a controlled manner without hitting the cones or putting their feet down.

Once the rider reaches the finish line, the rider will come to a controlled and complete stop.

## Scanning

Scanning requires looking over your shoulder without moving your handlebars and steering where you don't want to go. Ask for a volunteer from class. Have them straddle their bike facing the class. Stand behind the volunteer, have the volunteer place their hands on the handlebars and then have them look over either their right or left shoulder.

Did they move the handlebar?

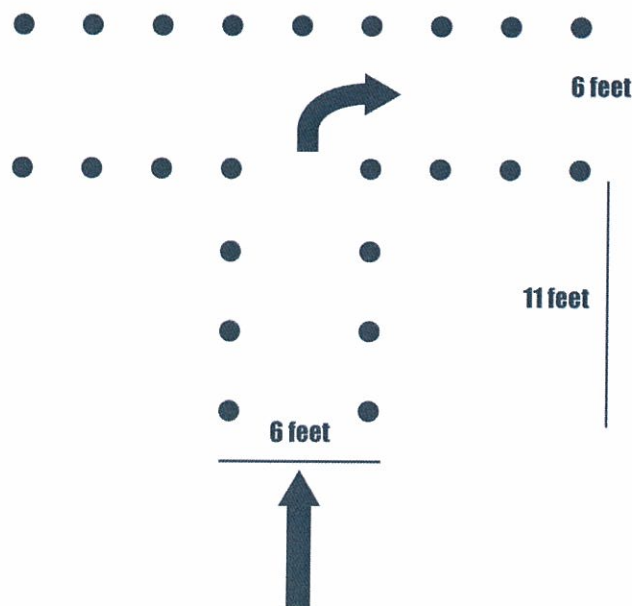
Drills:

### Scan

1. Have the students ride in a straight line. Stand behind the students (slightly to the left or right) as they ride. Call out the student's name and have him/her identify the object you're holding up or how many fingers you're holding up without weaving off the line. Cycle through this several times and have the students scan both left and right. Move in close to the line as the students become more proficient.

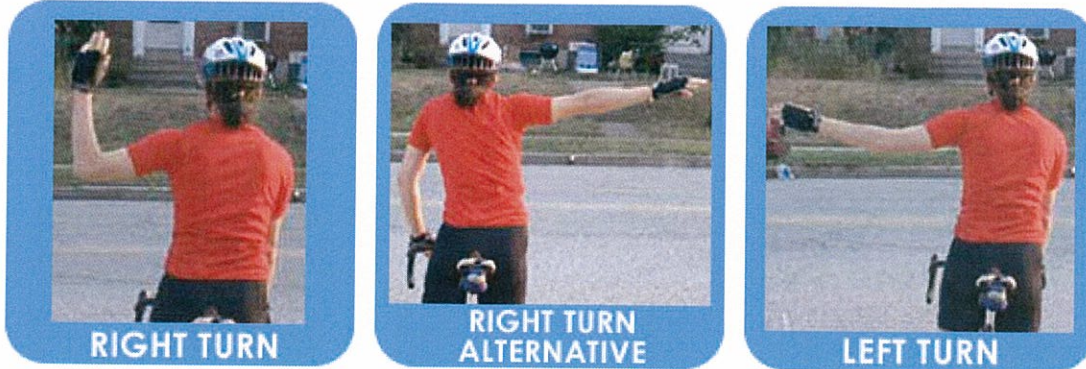
### Turn and Scan

1. Lay out a right/left turn situation with cones and/or street chalk. Have the riders ride through course once or twice just to get a feel for it.
2. Proceed through the course again and have the students execute a right turn (scan for overtaking traffic prior to the turn).
3. Repeat with a left turn. Cycle through several times to make sure everyone is performing the scan adequately, as this is one of the most important skills for cyclists.



## Signaling

1. Demonstrate hand signals for right turns, left turns and slowing/stopping.

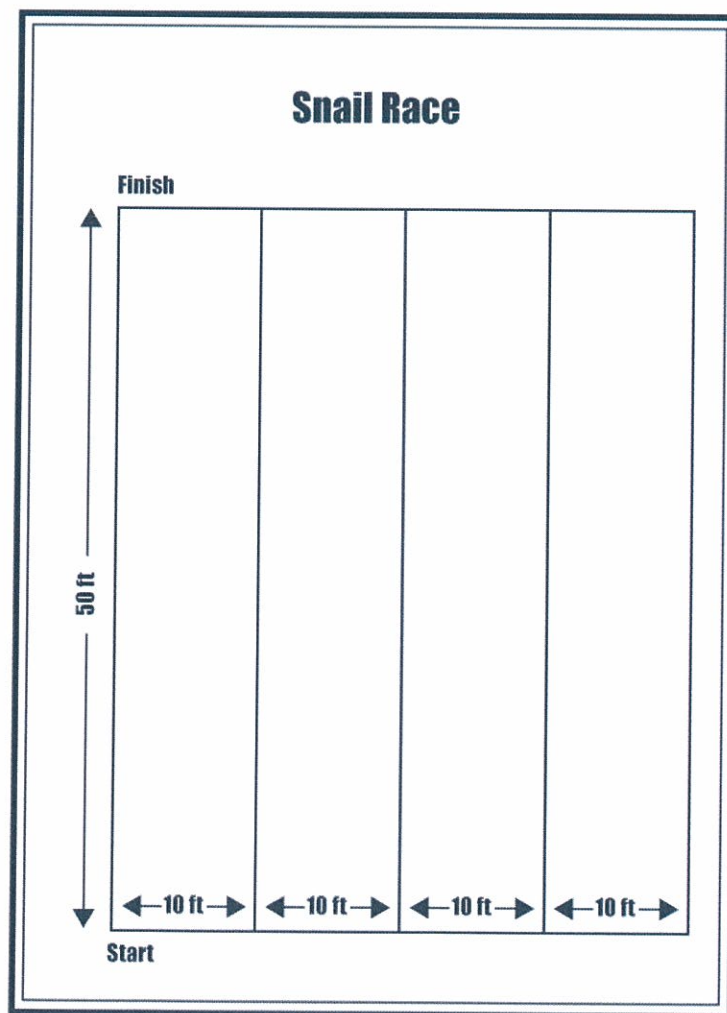


2. Have the students pedal through the turn and scan course (outlined on the previous page) again and have them signal their turns. Practice both right and left turns with signals.
3. Run through the course again and have them add scanning to their signaling. Run through the drill several times to make sure all of the students are performing the tasks proficiently.

## Snail Race

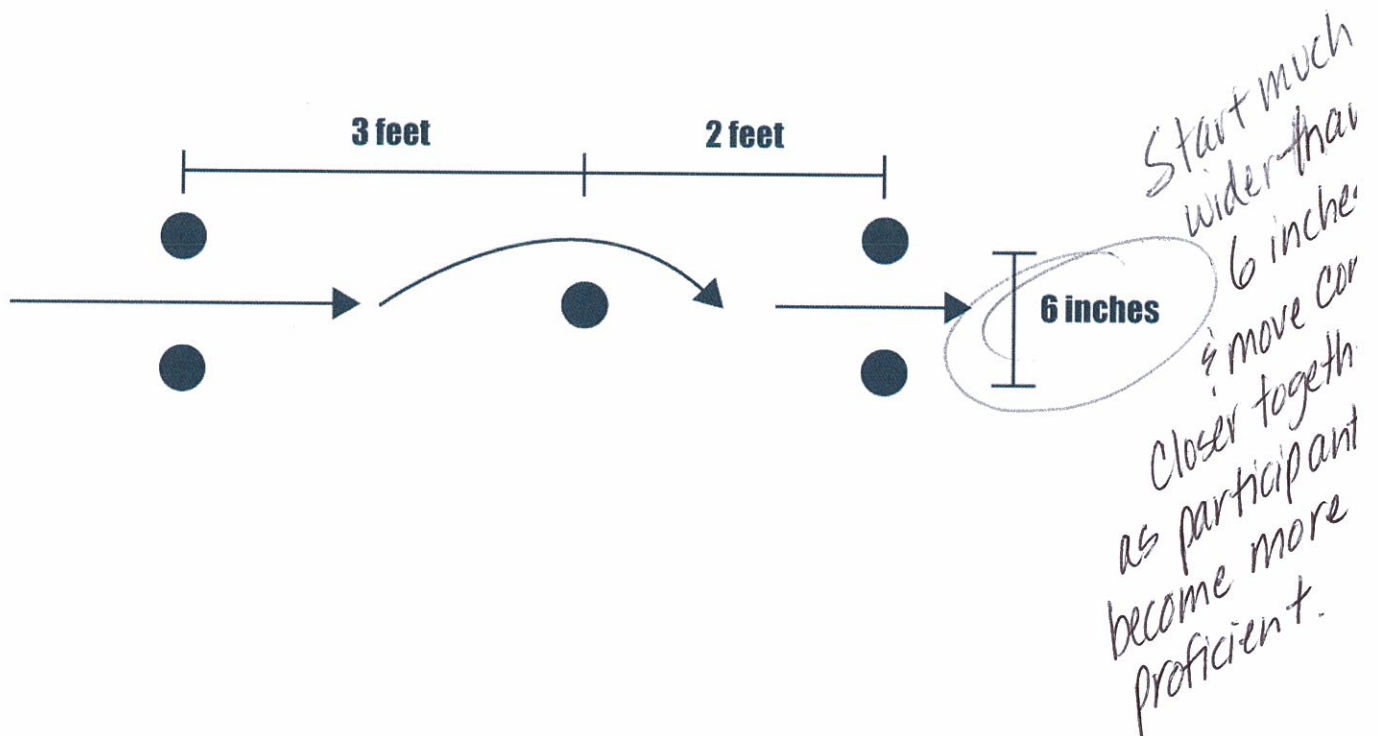
This activity helps riders hone their low-speed balance skills and improve their control at all speeds. The last one across the finish line wins. (Kids love this drill)

Set up the course by creating lanes that are 10 feet wide and 35-40 feet long (use street chalk or cones). Line up the contestants at the start. Contestants ride as slowly as possible without leaving their lanes, putting a foot down, running into anyone else (or trackstanding, for the more advanced riders)—these infractions are cause for elimination. Run several heats and have the winners from each heat face off. You can also make it more interesting by narrowing the lanes as the competition progresses if the bike handling skills are adequate—most likely with older kids.



## Rock Dodge

The Rock Dodge is a simple and useful skill for urban riding. It allows you to quickly and easily avoid rocks, glass, bottle crowns, small potholes, and other things you don't want to ride over or through. To practice this skill, while riding straight at speed, you will first "twitch" your handlebars slightly one direction, and then "twitch" them back in the opposite direction. This steers the bike out from underneath you and instantly creates a slight lean in your bike, while allowing your body to continue in its straight path of travel. The wheels and tires will avoid the rock and you'll still be happily on your way. You may also want to put your weight on your pedals and lift your weight slightly from your seat. If you hit the rock with your weight on your seat, you are more likely to get a flat tire. If you shift your weight to the pedals, this type of flat tire can usually be avoided.



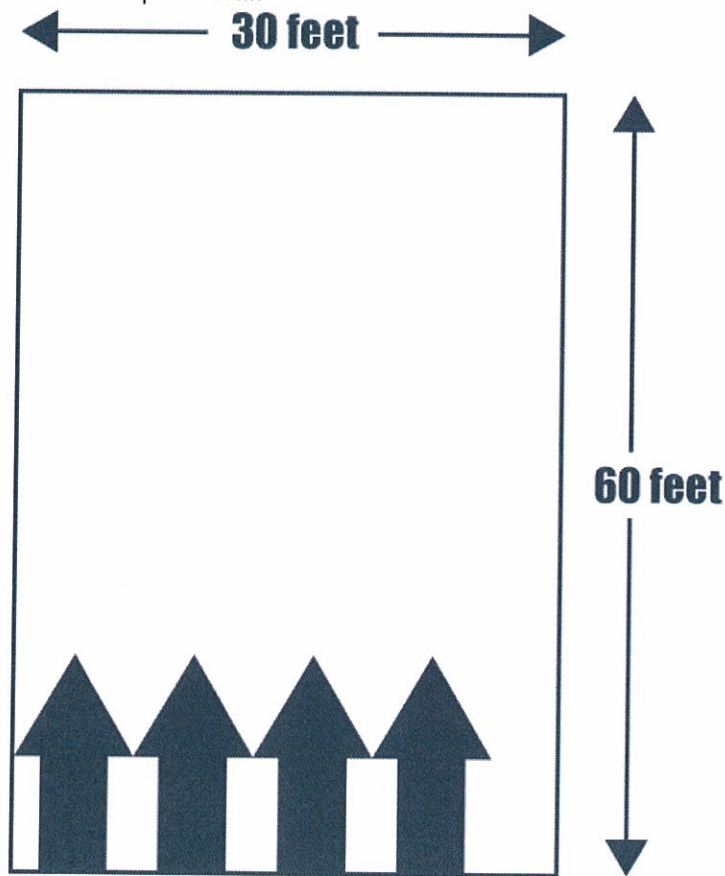
## Scramble

Use cones or street chalk to mark off a 30' x 60' area on a paved surface. Explain to the riders that they may ride wherever they want to within the area. The object is to make the space difficult to navigate without running in to one another. The Marshal will allow riders to enter one at a time, the object being to ride chaotically within the confined area without touching another rider.

If the Marshal sees riders making contact they must be "cited". Intentional collisions will result in the offending riders being removed for the duration of the station. The riders involved in accidental collisions should have their licenses temporarily revoked and their insurance rates increased.

Alternately, design a "garage" or separate area outside of the drill's boundaries to send riders as they exit the drill. This is a good area to hold discussions about the drill and rules of the road.

Stop the traffic after a few minutes and ask the riders what rules would make the course less chaotic. Try their ideas. At the end of the course, ask the riders if the new rules helped. Send riders into the area one at a time until everyone is inside the boundaries. Let the chaotic riding continue briefly and then stop the drill.



Bicyclists enter the area one at a time.  
All enter from the same direction.

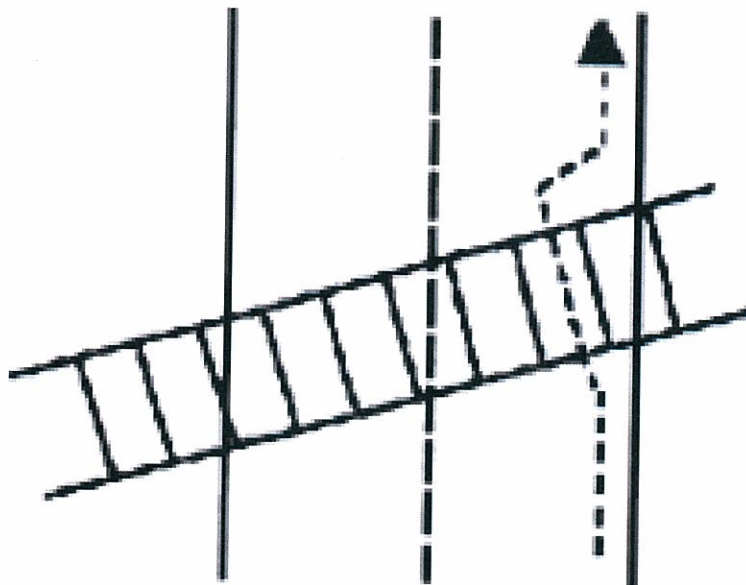
## Crossing railroad tracks

Crossing railroad tracks is an important skill. Bicycle wheels can get caught in train tracks. Always try to cross at a 90 degree angle to the tracks, and if your approach is at less than a 45 degree angle, dismount and walk your bike across.

Execute this drill by drawing railroad tracks on the pavement; alternately, you can construct trails using vinyl baseboard material or similar rubberized materials.

Explain to the participants that they must look both ways before crossing train tracks - one train may have passed but another could be behind it, or coming from the opposite direction on the next track.

Initially angle the railroad tracks to be perpendicular to the bike rodeo course. As the course is being run, they will get used to crossing on this angle. Later on, change the orientation of the tracks and have students adjust their crossing angle to be perpendicular. Feed the riders onto the course one at a time, several seconds apart.



## Demon Driveway

The purpose of this drill is to teach children to stop at the end of their driveways and check conditions before turning onto street or sidewalk.

Drill:

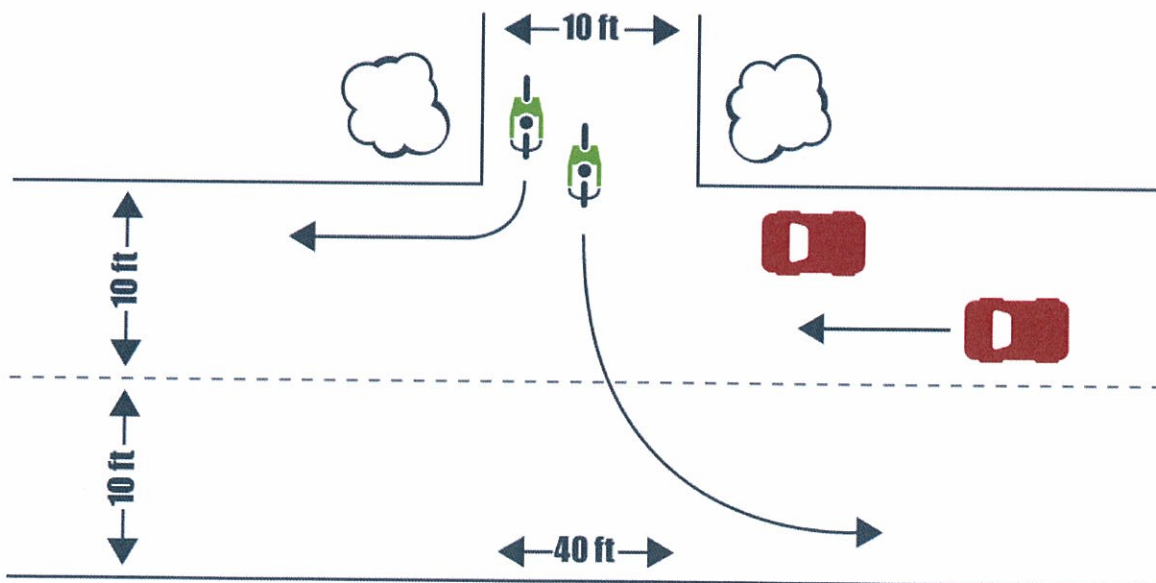
Ask what they should do at the end of their driveway before entering sidewalk or street (stop and look both ways). Ask them what to look for (cars, trucks, other bicycles, dogs, cats, pedestrians).

1. They are to ride to the end of the driveway, stop, look both ways, and then give a hand signal for a right or left turn. (Have the group practice turn signals as part of the drill).
2. Have a volunteer hold a cardboard car (if facing the driveway, traffic is approaching; if turned away, traffic is gone). Use a fence/bush as a sight obstruction: children will have to move forward to see around it.

Watch for these errors:

- Child looks only one way
- Child gives turn signal while riding out of the driveway, riding with one hand only
- Child fails to look for traffic
- Child looks to left, then right until clear, then rides out without final check for traffic

Ask kids which side of the road they are supposed to ride on. Ask if they ride with or against traffic. Remind them that it is illegal and dangerous to ride against traffic because cars are not expecting them there. Make sure they stay to the right as they proceed into the street.



## Crazy Crossroads

The purpose of this drill is to teach children to stop at stop signs and to familiarize them with proper lane positioning.

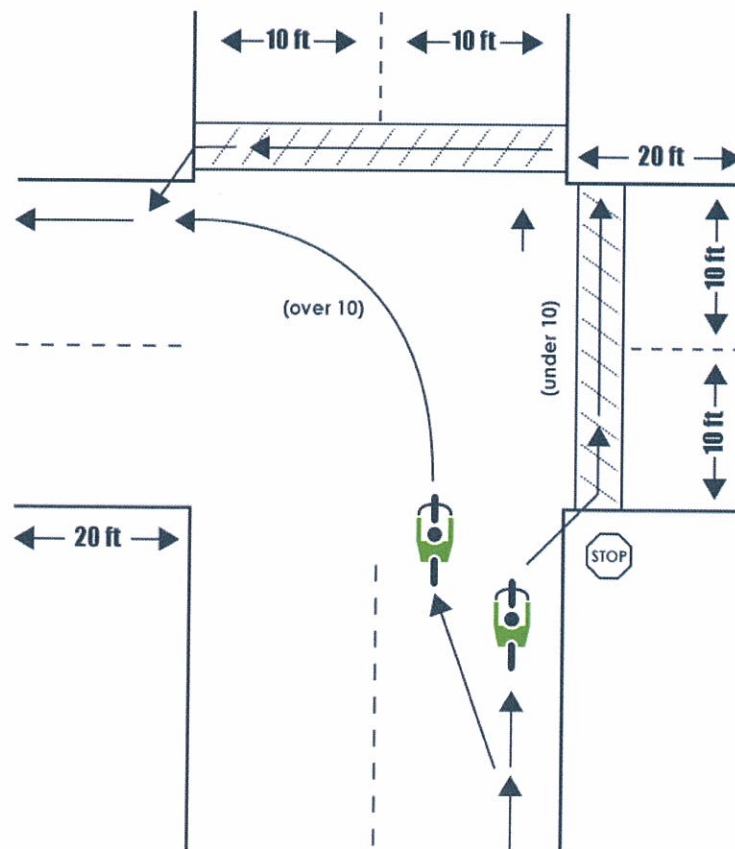
Drill:

Tell kids this is a street intersection. Have them get in line and approach the stop sign, where they stop, look both ways, then proceed, making hand signals as appropriate for left and right turns.

Optional: Have two volunteers hold cardboard cars (car facing means traffic coming; car turned away, traffic is clear). Make sure kids stop at sign then move far enough to see traffic and again look both ways before proceeding.

Watch for these errors:

- Child does not stop, or looks only one way before proceeding
- Child sees a car and waits, but does not check again before proceeding
- Child making left turn places self too far to the right while waiting (or vice versa for right turn)



## Put It All Together

Here's your chance to be creative! Set up your rodeo as a simulated street, as a series of drills or you can take to the streets for a road ride (depending on the age of the participants, of course). Here's an example:

